Customize appearance

Meet Eminem And Rihanna's 'Monster' Songwriter

Singer/songwriter talks to MTV News about how 'the biggest risk' of his career paid off.

By Rob Markman

By Rob Markman

October 29, 2013 / 7:12 PM

Chances are you've never heard of Jon Bellion, but that's OK, because both Eminem and Rihanna know him quite well.

A quick YouTube search of the 22-year old singer/songwriter will turn up a collection of hopeful pop pieces like "Ungrateful Eyes" and "One More Time," but diehards will have to look closely at the liner notes for the Eminem's November 5 album *The Marshall Mathers LP 2* to find Bellion's name listed as a songwriter for Slim Shady's new single [article id="1716418"]"The Monster."[/article]

The striking curse to the confines of fame dropped on Monday, but Bellion tells MTV News that his monstrous journey began about less than a year ago in Stadium Red, a Harlem, New York studio.

"That's where Just Blaze works out of, and I always wanted to work there just to see his studio and stuff," the wide-eyed pop scribe told MTV News on Tuesday (October 29).

Bellion's session wasn't with Blaze though; instead he was called to work on music with producers Frequency, Alias and their artist Bebe Rexha. The session started with Bellion playing some of his solo songs (he's managed by Visionary Music Group, the same outfit who signed Def Jam rapper Logic to his first deal), but quickly turned as he started coming up with a song for Rexha to record. "Fast forward dude plays keys, hopped on the keys, started playing chords and I'm literally like, 'I'm friends with the monster,'" Bellion said singing the words that Rihanna would eventually sing. "I just mumbled it."

Impressed with the initial vocal sketch, the foursome decided to continue and record the song with Rexha in mind. "It was like a nice rhyme, so simple, so graspable. Fast forward 45 minutes she hopped in the booth, cut the hook that I wrote. She added some weird yodels on top of it," he explained. "It was a full-blown song, it was like a Shakira four-to-the-floor type of record. The production was totally different."

Once the song was recorded Frequency suggested that they offer the track up to Shady Records, where he had a connection producing for Slaughterhouse. "We were all like, 'Yeah that'll be crazy. That will be so dope if that happened,'" Bellion said, recalling the pie in the sky proposal. "I come back four days later to the studio and he's like, 'Yo, Atlantic wants the record, Shady wants the record, everybody wants the joint.'"

The creation team eventually decided to go with Eminem. Though other artists had guaranteed to make the song a single out of the gate, the Shady team made no such promises. "Eminem was the biggest risk," he said. "But we were like, 'It's the biggest payoff if he takes it.'"